



MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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February 11, 2016

Bill Storm, Environmental Review Manager
Minnesota Department of Commerce
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul MN 55101

Re: In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Site Permit for the 215 MW Black Dog 6 Project in Burnsville, Minnesota
Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Docket Number: E-002/GS-15-834
DNR ERDB Number: 20160127

Dear Mr. Storm:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the application for a site permit for the 215 MW Black Dog 6 Project in Burnsville, Minnesota. Please consider the following input regarding the application and scoping for environmental review.

As detailed in the permit application, an active peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) nest box is mounted on the Unit 3 / 4 smokestack. The peregrine falcon is a Minnesota species of special concern. The DNR is aware that Xcel Energy planned to remove this smokestack in accordance with previous DNR and USFWS guidance; however, the removal of the smokestack has been delayed due to safety concerns that are currently being addressed. The peregrine falcon (including nest and eggs) is federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Please contact the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Twin Cities Field Office if nest box removal is proposed during nesting season. If the smokestack is still in place during nesting season, late April to early May, it is possible that nesting activities could be disturbed by construction activities. Signs of stress exhibited by peregrines include flying towards individuals or equipment as well as other flying erratic behavior. If stressed behavior is observed, the DNR Nongame Program Region Specialist should be contacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jamie Schrenzel
Principal Planner
Environmental Review Unit
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